Edward Ashmun, in the determination which he gave, of leading Christian character, we should remember that his disciplines was unfavorable to the healthful growth of his mind & character. Many of the difficulties which he encountered in the course of his labors in behalf of the cultivated natives of the land, would have been avoided, had he been trained in the knowledge of the Bible, & of the principles which have entered into the formation of Christian character. Could the influence of these principles be diffused among the natives, & become incorporated with their habits of thought & action, the work of their moral renovation would be comparatively easy. But what shall we do in the absence of these principles? Shall we leave the depths of the moral nature of this people to remain as they are? Shall we not rather endeavor to bring to bear upon them the influence of the truth, which has changed the face of Christendom?

Monrovia, Libria 23d Dec. 1851.

Rev. & Dear Sir:

The desire to hear of me & my labors, repeatedly expressed by several of you, when as yet I was one of your number, still lingers sweetly in my memory, & prompts me now to the fulfilment of my promise. I could do so with greater satisfaction, were it in my power to report anything as actually accomplished in furtherance of the immediate object which brought me hither. Indeed, the consideration, that nothing of the kind has been done, would impose a fetter upon my pen, until I could write you of something more than intentions & expectations; were it not, that I fear it would then be too late for such a communication to reach you before the close of your present term of study, when most of you, who feel an interest in me personally, will have left to return no more.

It would have seemed strange to myself a year since, as doubtless it will appear to you now, to think that I should spend six months on African soil, & in the midst of the scene of my labors, without breaking ground, & ground too that is greatly in need of cultivation. Yet so it is.

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To some of you, perhaps to all, the fact may appear so indicative of a want of zeal, as to require a word of explanation. Briefly then, my reasons are these: As many mournful instances show, hasty exertions in this climate are dangerous. In many cases they have proved fatal; in others they have made future labors inefficient, if they do not make necessary a withdrawal of them altogether. It would be unwise to close our eyes upon these lessons of experience. God, in his wisdom, has been established certain laws of nature; & he will not alter them to suit the wishes or convenience of men. The system, formed under other influences, must gradually conform to these laws, or break down in consequence of their violation. Impressed more deeply of these truths, as they were brought more frequently to my mind, I was prepared to listen to the advice from all quarters, not to be too eager in commencing the arduous & perplexing duties of a teacher. And I was the more easily reconciled to this course, as most of the boys who will be under my tuition, were still improving in the School of Mr. James. Add to this, that ample scope for the exercise of all my strength, was afforded, & still is, in pulpit-ministrations; an opportunity which, as I have been able, I have endeavored to improve.

Thus far a Kind Providence has dealt gently with us, (I include my "better half,") As for my own part, I have been in the enjoyment of almost ordinary health, altho' by no means able to perform the same amount of mental labor as that to which I have been accustomed. The acclimating process, only in one instance, has risen to fever; & that was slight. With Mr. Wilson, you will pardon my speaking of my wife, for really

It is the enterprise which that Son undertook to execute when he left the regions of glory & of bliss, & travelled in the greatness of his strength toward this world, when he assumed our lowly nature, & when he labored & suffered & died that we might be redeemed from the curse & the consequence of Sin. It is that very work of grace to forward which Christ ascended up on high, leading Captivity Captive & receiving gifts for men - the most precious of them, the purchased & the promised Spirit; whose descent was to fit the Apostles & their successors as witnesses unto him "both in Jerusalem, & in all Judea, & in Samaria, & unto the uttermost parts of the earth." And it is to advance this same work that the Saviour's mind is now travelling in ceaseless intercession, & on which the universality of the power which he has received in heaven & on earth is now exercised by him as King of Kings & Lord of Lords. His Character was announced by the angels on the plains of Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, & good will to men". His Dominion is the diffusion of light & life, & liberty & love among men. His Triumph will be the establishment of that glorious Kingdom which is righteousness & peace & joy in the Holy Ghost. And this is the end toward which all the divine purposes & plans are directed. It meets us every where in Scripture, it conjoins us at every turn in Providence. It mingles with the songs of praise which inspiration has furnished; & presses upon us in the simplest supplications which Christ taught his disciples. We cannot utter the prayer of our Lord without supplicating that God's name may be hallowed, that his kingdom may come, & that his will may be done throughout the Earth, even as it is in heaven. Such & so great is this Cause of Missions, in the view of God; such & so great for the welfare of Man.

It is, therefore, not left to the option of Christians whether this Cause shall lie near their hearts, or hold merely a co-ordinate place with the thousand enterprises of the day. The acknowledgment of Christ as theirs, identifies them with his Cause. He, in whose heart there burns no flame of love toward him who "first loved us" & "gave himself for us," has reason to distrust the genuineness of his faith. But where love to X. has taken possession of the soul, that soul must love the objects of a Saviour love, & must desire to see men everywhere rendering to him that love & praise so justly his. And how shall they love & praise Him, whom excellence they know nothing of, whose glory & whose grace they have not even heard? — Is this so? Can it be otherwise? A Christian without love to Christ! It is a contradiction. No soul is without affections. If it loves not holiness for its author, it must love Sin — & therefore is still unsaved. How startling! And, Oh! how awful, for multitudes who bear the Christian name. I know love may be faint, & faith feeble. But will not such entitle only to a very low place in Heaven, & I might almost say, give occasion for repentance thro' out eternity?

With you, my beloved brethren, I trust, it is not so, that love to X. & love to souls is cold & inoperative. Far different, I hope, are your motives & desires. And while I should think myself unkind, if anything I could say, might be the means of extinguishing in an intenser flame the fires of holy love within your hearts, I deem it enough simply to remind you of a solemn truth which cannot too often be made the live theme of your meditations. You are Candidates for the Ministry of X. You have consecrated yourselves to his service. Your position declares you to have devoted your lives, unreservedly to God. Of course, your only desire is that he may use you for his glory. As to what particular field you may occupy, is not a matter of choice, of preference, but of duty. At such a time as this, therefore, when the world is white & ready for the harvest, the foreign field must, at least, engage your consideration. No man is worthy of the Ministry, who is unwilling to go, when

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Monday. Jan.y 26. 1852. – My letter is still here. The vessel has been detained, but is expected to sail this morning. By the delay I am able to give you a word of additional information.

The "Alexander High School" was opened on the 12th. of this month. There are 13 pupils – 8 of them studying, (commencing) Latin. They vary from 12 to 20 years of age. Only two above 16. In their progress, they differ still more, in some cases, inversely to their age. It is, indeed, the "day of small things;" but for this very reason, the more pressing need of making a beginning. – Most of the scholars, I think, will learn well. We have, however, no literary atmosphere here to stimulate & prompt to exertion & perseverance. School opens at 9 A. M., & continues till 2, with an intermission of 20 minutes.

As a part of the exercises, three mornings I read in the Old Testament, beginning at Genesis, paying attention to the Geography & Chronology – explain Orientalisms, & make some practical remarks. The Chapter thus read, I assign as a Bible lesson, for the Sabbath, on which I examine them on Monday morning. This I designate as a course in Biblical History, simple, not quite so complete as Prof. Addison's. Besides this I explain daily 3 or 4 verses of Proverbs, which I require to be committed to memory for the following day. Music, also, will form a part of the regular exercises, as soon as we can get books.

Besides the duties of the school, I have felt it my duty, in the absence of a pastor, to establish a weekly prayer-meeting & lecture. The Harmony of the gospels – with a practical exposition, seemed to offer the most appropriate means of instruction in Scripture truth. I find the exercise interesting & profitable to myself, as I have reason to think it is to the people.

It may be, that I shall have to desist from preaching on the Sabbath. Yesterday, I preached both morning & afternoon. I fear, however, the labor will be too great, - more than I can well endure, in this enervating climate. The field here is large & promising. But it is like an old farm, run to waste, which it will require much toil to reclaim, & make productive. Many wild plants must be destroyed, & a great deal better seed be sown. Would, there were an assistant in the work.

Our last advices from America, brought the sad intelligence of your loss, in the death of our venerable father, Dr. Alexander. It is a loss that cannot be repaired. Other good men there are, but there is no other Archibald Alexander. You have felt his absence. I have, too. We mourn, but we will not repine. He had served his appointed time faithfully upon Earth. He has been called to nobler labors, & higher employments above. Let us follow in his shining pathway.

And now, my beloved brethren, these hasty lines must close. Believe me that I love you, & remember you in my prayers. May you enjoy the presence, the guidance, the protection, the Comfort which Jesus has promised to his own; may his love animate your hearts, & make you fruitful in his service; & at last, having borne the cross, may we wear the crown - the Crown of Life & Glory which fadeth not away.

Yrs. fraternally

David A. Wilson

P. S. Two other scholars entered the School today.

con the Providence of God may direct him. — Providence does call for men, & for many, to go abroad. The door is open; the work must be done; & it must be done thro' the agency of men. God will not work without them.

I take it for granted that all of you, more or less, have made this subject a matter of solemn, & prayerful attention. It will not be necessary for me to specify the several considerations which should govern your decision. Your own reflections will suggest; & they will be afforded from other quarters.

There is but one consideration, that I would beg to lay before you; & I do this the more freely, as it is one upon which I have seen but little, & heard still less. I refer to some of the qualifications of a Missionary to the heathen. — We have all heard of the necessity of Piety & learning, & zeal, & a self-sacrificing spirit. Of these, indeed, there cannot be too much. They are required everywhere, & some of them especially on Missionary ground. But they are not all, nor are any of them peculiarly requisite for success among a degraded people.

Tho' I am not laboring, nor will it be my business to labor, among heathen, I have had opportunity daily for the last six months to study heathen character. There are plenty of them here, & of every variety. From the knowledge I have thus gained of "native" character, it appears to me, that no man can be an efficient laborer in this department of effort, who does not possess in a high degree decision of character, inflexible firmness of purpose, & a keen insight of the workings of the human heart.

All of you who have read the essay of John Foster on the character first-mentioned, will have the knowledge of the elements which constitute it, more fully, & more ably presented than I can pretend to set them forth. The other characteristics are closely related to the first, either as constituents of it, or the result. Decision of character is the main one, the possession of which will secure the rest. But it may be asked why is this of so much moment in dealing with heathen?

Because they are children in all that pertains to intellect, but men in passions - in habits & in physical strength. We know the fickleness, the obstinacy, the sensitiveness, & the waywardness of children. Their feelings are their measure of right & wrong. We know, too, how often they bend the will of the parent to their wishes. Let them dispositions settle into habits - & to them bring the sense of power which shall seem control, & you will perceive that a vacillating, yielding disposition will be impotent - a mere plaything, to be bowed whichsoever the current may set: it may not go into any lengthened combination. We must not forget, that just in proportion as men are sunk from all that dignifies our nature, they are confirmed in all that debases it: The highest development of mind, are little better than cunning, & that is in perfection, Self reigns supreme - & every thing & every person will be laid under contribution for its satisfaction. You must expect to be imposed upon, if possible, on every occasion, & under the most specious guise. Flesh & blood shall be compared to circumvent you. What but the rock could withstand - Vicious temptings & the sinews of your influence are cut. Respect for you is diminished, if not entirely lost. You are degraded in their estimation to a level with themselves. And if once so regarded - for any good you will be likely to accomplish, you may do it as readily anywhere else, as among them.

It may be thought by some that these remarks lose sight of the divine efficiency, & resolve all into human effort. Not so, my brethren. He who has sought to win the hearts of men to good - & has seen the results of his endeavors, must be blind indeed, if he fails to discern, that man's wisdom is folly, & man's strength weakness. Yet while our sufficiency is only & altogether of God, we must not forget that he is a God of wisdom - & therefore, adapts means proper for the end, & will use fit instruments to accomplish its purpose. The same reasons that require qualifications for the ministry at all - require, with like necessity, & I mistake greatly, the qualifications noticed for success among the heathen. St Paul was needed to give efficiency to the ministration of truth among the heathen of his day; (See 1st Cor

She is an important "help" in Missionary life; with her the case has been different. She has recently had a severe attack of the African fever, & from wh. She has not as yet recovered. Recent symptoms, however, give hope of her restoration.

It has been greatly in our favour that we have been relieved of the cares of house-keeping, (wh. here, where so many conveniences are wanting, are not small,) by finding a comfortable home in the family of Mr. Ramer. I am conscious that the mention of such a particular, will be likely to provoke a smile on many a countenance; but I am also conscious, that of all earthly benefits, this is far from being the least; for wh. we have reason to be thankful. A home anywhere is sweet; & certainly none the less so in Africa. You may infer from this that we are not destitute of comforts, nor enjoyment. Let no one think from Missionary life from such a consideration. I gladly bear my testimony that it is grounden. Privations there are; many things, that are desirable, must be foregone; but there is more than a compensation for them all, in "the luxury of doing good." I have long since thought, that the so called Sacrifices of Missionary life, have been unduly Exaggerated, & my own experience thus far has not altered the opinion.

As I have no information to communicate concerning the "Alexander High School," further than to state, that it is my purpose, (Dv. volente) to commence instruction in it in Jan'y. next, under circumstances by no means encouraging, in consequence of the unsettled state of the community, growing out of a war with the Fishmen at Grand Bassa, you will indulge me

in the expression of a few thoughts relative to the general subject of missions.

Some notes touching Liberia, would probably be more interesting, especially from one who has enjoyed the advantage of personal observation for months. It is my design, however, Providence willing, to prepare an article for one of the papers of our Church; which although destined for a wider circulation, you will please consider, intended especially for your notice. I will simply mention here, that the Presbyterian interest here, in Monrovia, is in a most unhealthy condition. Mr. Ellis has proved himself quite unworthy the confidence reposed in him, & blasted my hope that was entertained of him in the Church. He has been obliged to resign his charge of the Congregation, & his conduct has been such, as, I think, nothing short of deposition from the ministry, will satisfy. I regret exceedingly, not only the issue of his career, but the fact that he was ever invested with the office. To bring good out of an event so dark & discouraging to our apprehensions, belongs only to the Lord. May such be accomplished, in his own good time & way.--I return.

The cause of Missions is emphatically the Cause of God & the Cause of Man. It is that enterprise of mercy on which the Eternal Father entered when he promised to his only-begotten & well-beloved Son--"a seed to serve him," & "the heathen for his inheri-

tance"